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TAGS: [ECON](#) [KPAO](#) [OIIP](#) [SCUL](#) [NI](#) [AGOA](#)

SUBJECT: NIGERIA: KEY ELITES WORK TOGETHER TO OVERCOME AGOA  
FAILURES

**1. SUMMARY:** The Public Affairs Section and the Foreign Commercial Service of the U.S. Mission in Nigeria organized two one-day seminars, June 19-20, in Abuja focusing on the Africa Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA). The seminars, "AGOA: Participating in Trade," and "Public-Private Partnership for Success with AGOA," featured PD-provided speaker Dr. Sharon Freeman with Fred Oladeinde and Gregory Simpkins of the Washington-based Foundation for Democracy in Africa and Embassy Counselor for Commercial Affairs Miguel Pardo de Zela. The interaction of the speakers with the audience, and the audience with itself, created a positive dynamic and led to pledges of follow up between the GON and private sector. Audience participation included seven Senators from the Committee on Economic Affairs; senior officials of the Nigeria Customs Service, Nigerian Investment Promotion Council (NIPC), and Nigerian Export Promotion Council (NEPC); officials from ministries of commerce and industries at state and federal levels, and leading industrialists and textile industry representatives from Kano and Kaduna. The seminars also promoted AGOA-related activities including the July 11-12 Seminar in Accra, Ghana. End Summary.

GPRA Data:

**2. DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY:** More than 140 policymakers and key players in the Nigerian manufacturing sector participated in the two days of seminars. The key speaker for the two sessions, Dr. Sharon Freeman, described AGOA and explained its potential to enhance growth and productivity. Dr. Freeman said the failure to date to implement textile visas and trans-shipment laws, and poor infrastructure, had prevented Nigeria from realizing significant benefits from AGOA. She encouraged the private and public sector participants to express their own concerns, and suggested possible remedies based on her experience promoting the Caribbean Basin Initiative in the 1980s. Oladeinde and Simpkins addressed the need for public-private sector interaction. Pardo de Zela discussed the inevitability of globalization, the need for Nigerian enterprises to proactively seek out and use available information and sources of credit, and described how the Foreign Commercial Service could assist businesses wishing to export to the U.S.

**3. JUSTIFICATION AND OBJECTIVE:** During the two years since AGOA became law, Nigeria has made little progress in increasing exports to the U.S. Macroeconomic policies which hamper exports, a lack of commitment by the business community, and poor infrastructure are among the obstacles to using AGOA to create an alternative to petroleum as a source of export earnings. These seminars brought key individuals and institutions together to see how these problems might be addressed.

**4. DATE:** June 19-20, 2002, FY 2002, third quarter

**5. MPP UMBRELLA THEME AND AUDIENCE REACHED:** Economic Development. Over 140 contacts drawn from relevant Nigerian institutions, including officials of the Ministry of Commerce, Nigerian Export Promotion Council, Nigerian Investment Promotion Council, NEXIM Bank, Nigerian Customs Service, elected officials including several national legislators and state governors or their representatives, and private sector representatives from chambers of commerce, major textile manufacturers, exporters, and non-governmental organizations engaged in manufacturing attended the seminar. Regular viewers of Nigeria's national television, estimated to be several million, and those who read newspapers, were also part of the audience reached with the AGOA message.

**6. NON-USG SUPPORT:** None

**7. USG SUPPORT:** Excellent. Post appreciates Washington's support in making Dr. Freeman available. The Foreign Commercial Service

was also of great assistance, as was USAID, which had sponsored Oladeinde and Simpkins and his group in their trip to Nigeria. Freeman is an articulate speaker. At Post request, she modified her presentation to promote greater dialogue among the participants. Her experience in working with Central America gave her the authority to convince the audience that they could overcome similar problems facing their export sector.

18. MEDIA REACTION: Dr. Freeman gave a 45-minute interview to Rhythm Radio, Abuja. The national TV network, NTA, gave her a 60-second soundbite. Lagos-based Vanguard, one of Nigeria's leading papers, particularly among business readers, ran a three-quarter-page interview with Dr. Freeman.

Jeter